In the claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. – 44. (canceled)

45[[46]]. (previously presented) A link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information, said network including a local node and a remote node, wherein each of said nodes includes an MTP3 structure, an M2PA structure, and an SCTP structure, comprising the steps of:

establishing a link between said local and remote nodes by creating an association therebetween;

detecting, by at least one of said local and remote nodes, that a select condition related to said association has occurred;

receiving, by an M2PA structure in one of said nodes, a message from the MTP3 structure in said one node, requesting a selected sequence number;

determining said selected sequence number, by said M2PA structure in said one node, by locating the first gap in selected messages;

responsive to said detection step and said determining, exchanging message sequence number information between said local and remote nodes on an alternative link established therebetween; and

based on said message sequence number information, retransmitting messages over said alternative link, said messages starting at a predetermined sequence number.

46[[47]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 45[[46]], wherein said message sequence number information comprises SCTP sequence number information.

47[[48]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 45[[46]], wherein said message sequence number information comprises SS7 sequence number information.

48[[49]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 47[[48]], wherein said SS7 sequence number information comprises Forward Sequence Number information.

49[[50]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 47[[48]], wherein said SS7 sequence number information comprises Backward Sequence Number information.

50[[51]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 47[[48]], wherein said select condition related to said association comprises a Quality of Service (QoS) condition.

51[[52]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 47[[48]], wherein said select condition related to said association comprises a link failure condition.

52[[53]]. (original) The link changeover method in an IP-based telecommunications network for transporting SS7 signaling information as set forth in claim 47[[48]], wherein said select condition related to said association comprises a link reliability condition.

53[[28]]. (canceled)